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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Fourth periodic report of States parties

Finland*

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Fourth periodic report by Finland to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

This is the fourth periodic report of the Government of Finland on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The third report was presented in January 1997 but has not yet been considered by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Therefore, it and the present fourth report will be considered together by the Committee at its session in the summer of 2000. This report is an updating report addressing, in particular, the questions raised in the concluding observations of the Committee at its fourteenth session. It also includes information on recent legislation and measures taken to eliminate discrimination against women.

This fourth report was drafted in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in close cooperation with various ministries and public authorities. Non-governmental organizations and certain other bodies were asked to submit written statements for the preparation of the report. In addition, a hearing was organized in September 1999 at which public authorities, non-governmental organizations, labour market organizations and advisory boards were given an opportunity to present their views and comments on the draft report.

This report was submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in October 1999.

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Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realisation of this principle,

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organisation or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

1. Fundamental rights reform

An overall reform of the Finnish Constitution has been carried out and the new Constitution (731/1999) will enter into force on 1 March 2000. The earlier amended provisions on fundamental rights were inserted, mostly unaltered, in Chapter 2 of the new Constitution. Thus the reform of the Constitution does not entail amendments to the provisions concerning equality. On account of the reform, however, the provisions on fundamental rights may become more important than earlier for judicial practice, because courts, in accordance with the new Constitution (Section 106) must give priority

to a provision included in the Constitution in a case where the application of an ordinary Parliament Act would be in an apparent conflict with such a provision.

2. Equality Act

In December 1997 Finland repealed an implementing provision in its Act on Equality between Women and Men (the Equality Act) that made it possible to maintain the gender unequal additional pension arrangements established prior to the entry into force of the Act. At the same time, the Finnish Parliament passed a separate Act on the Equalisation of the Voluntary Additional Pension Arrangements (1038/1997), by which the pensionable ages and benefits under the voluntary additional pension arrangements were changed so as to be the same for both women and men. The Act lays down an equalisation method agreed on by the labour market organisations, and this method will be applied unless otherwise agreed. On certain conditions these provisions give an employee covered by an additional pension arrangement an individual right to choose between the previous lower pensionable age and the present higher pensionable age under the arrangement. The equalisation of benefits concerns all additional pension arrangements of employers. The Acts entered into force on 1 December 1997.

Also the amounts of compensation payable on account of discrimination have been increased. The minimum amount of compensation is FIM 15,600 and the maximum amount FIM 51,900. Depending on the type of discrimination and its circumstances, the maximum amount may be exceeded. The maximum may be doubled at the most. In other respects the provisions of the Equality Act, on compensation, have remained unchanged.

Finland has given account of the activities of the Ombudsman for Equality in its earlier reports. In 1997 the Ombudsman received requests for opinion concerning 138 cases and in 1998 concerning 176 cases. The majority of the requests concerned discrimination in working life. In 1997, 58 % of those requesting an opinion were women and 28 % were men. In 1998, the percentages were 47 % for women and 35 % for men.

A survey of the practical implications of the Equality Act, which entered into force in 1987, was launched in autumn 1998. This survey deals with the application of the Act and its societal implications, *inter alia,* in working life and decision-making. The survey also includes an interview with clients who have contacted the Ombudsman for Equality.

Article 3

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women , for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

1. The Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality of the Government of Finland

The Finnish Government's Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality for 1997-1999 was approved in February 1997. The main principles of the Plan of Action follow those of the Beijing Platform of Action and consequently emphasise the empowerment of women, the promotion and protection of human rights of women and the promotion of equality by mainstreaming, i.e. promotion of equality by extending the equality dimension to the preparation stage and all decision-making levels. It focuses on working life, education and training, information society, men's role in promoting equality and prevention of violence against women.

In addition to being an instrument of the Finnish Government's equality policy, the Plan of Action is a channel through which the Government informs citizens of its principles and practices in matters of equality.

The objectives set out in the Plan of Action were carried out as projects or tasks. The Plan of Action contains in total 96 projects. Of these, 23 have already been completed and 65 are going on. In 8 projects no measures have been taken yet. Examples of the ongoing projects are the assessment of the implications of the Equality Act, mainstreaming of gender equality in the administration as well as strengthening the equality objectives in the national employment programme and the EU structural funds programme.

A major achievement of the Plan of Action is a five-year, cross- sectoral project for the prevention of violence against women. It is further explained under Article 5 para 1.

In regard to the achievements of the Plan of Action, the support for women entrepreneurs has expanded considerably. Women entrepreneurs have been granted special loans, and tailored training and counselling have been provided to encourage women's entrepreneurship. Recently there has been an increase in the number of women entrepreneurs in repair services and services to business. Special efforts have been made to support entrepreneurship and self-employment among women in rural areas.

In most ministries an internal follow-up was organised for the implementation of the Plan of Action. Furthermore, an individual contact person or a person in charge was identified for each project in the follow-up process.

One of the aims of the Plan of Action, in accordance with mainstreaming principle, was to extend and divide the equality work more efficiently everywhere in the State administration. Monitoring of the Plan of Action was made the responsibility of working group consisting of public officials and it was the first interministerial body ever dealing with equality issues, including representatives from each ministry. It was also noted that equality policy became more visible and effective, and equality considerations were even reflected in projects outside the Plan of Action.

A follow-up report of the Plan of Action was submitted in May 1998. The report presented the measures carried out by ministries in 1997, as well as, the plans for the year 1998. The working party on the follow-up completed its work in February 1999 when the final report was submitted. In addition to presenting the measures, the report included an analysis of the current state of equality in Finland.

2. The Government Programme

Equality objectives set in the Programme of the present Finnish Government (1999) are, *inter alia*, the implementation of the mainstreaming principle in the State administration, especially in the drafting of new legislation, and the implementation of the principle of equal pay in working life, as well as the development of more flexible family leaves and the strengthening of gender equality. The distribution of costs for family leaves between the mother's and the father's employers and the inclusion of a special father's month in the family leave system will be examined. According to the Government Programme, the Government will examine the impact of the new legislation on the equality of sexes. Moreover, the administration of equality issues will be clarified and the related resources will be strengthened in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Government's foreign policy will emphasise human rights issues of women.

3. The gender barometer

In 1998, in line with the objectives of the Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the Council for Equality and Statistics Finland published the first Finnish gender barometer. As far as is known, the barometer is the first nation-wide interview survey in the world dealing exclusively with experiences, opinions and attitudes of the ordinary people on male-female equality.

According to the barometer, the public opinion is in favour of gender equality. The majority of women and men felt that, on the whole, women did not enjoy the same status as men in Finland. However, half of the women and men interviewed believed that equality would increase over the next ten years, and slightly fewer thought that there would be little change.

A clear majority of both women and men felt that married women had every right to be in paid work, whatever their family situation was. Women are still responsible for the families' well-being, but both women and men are more or less unanimous on that men should take more part in caring for and bringing up their children.

Inequality at work was recognised by both women and men, but women seemed to be more critical towards equality at work.

Subsequent gender barometers will be carried out at regular intervals to reflect the trends in the implementation of gender equality in Finland.

Article 4

1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

1. Quota provision of the Equality Act

The provision on a 40 % quota in the Equality Act, as amended in 1995, has increased women's participation in decision-making at the municipal level. In the 1996 municipal elections, women accounted for 36 % of the candidates and for 31 % of the elected representatives. After the elections, the quota provision was applied for the first time in municipal executive boards and other municipal bodies. Owing to the quota provision, the representation of women on municipal executive boards rose from 25 % to 45 % in 1996. Nonetheless, only 15 % of the chairpersons of municipal executive boards are women. The quota provision adjusted especially the gender distribution of committees, so that the number of women grew in committees on community services and other technical committees and that of men grew in committees dealing with social welfare, health, educational and cultural issues. Two of the three big cities in the metropolitan area have a woman mayor. However, in 1997 only 10 % of the Finnish cities and 9 % of the municipalities were managed by a woman.

Residents of municipalities have the right of appeal against the decisions of municipal bodies. The Supreme Administrative Court has held that the quota provision of the Equality Act also applies to municipal decisions. It is possible to have a decision violating the Equality Act repealed by way of appeal. For instance, the Supreme Administrative Court considered in its judgement (No. 907 of 23 April 1999) that decisions of the Kuusankoski Town Council on the appointment of the members and deputy members of the Town Executive Board and several Committees violated the Equality Act.

The State administration has not undergone a similar reappointment of bodies as the local administration did after the elections. However, the quota provision increased the number of women also in the decision-making of the State administration almost immediately after its entry into force in 1995. Before the entry into force of the quota provision, the proportion of women was 40 % or more only in one fifth of the State committees and corresponding bodies. After the entry into force of the quota provision, some 68 % of the committees have complied with the provision and the corresponding figure for the working groups has been 42 %.

Article 5

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;
(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

1. Violence against women

The international community has, for example, in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, held that violence against women is a violation of human rights.

In Finland the problem of violence against women is no longer hidden. It is recognised and discussed and ways of preventing violence against women are being sought. Prevention of violence against women and domestic violence are also included in the Equality Programme of the Finnish Government and a separate provision is indicated in the budget on fighting violence against women.

1.1 Legislative measures to prevent violence against women

The provisions of the Penal Code concerning sexual offences were reformed by an amendment to Chapter 20 of the Penal Code (563/1998), which entered into force on 1 January 1999. The reform clarified and simplified the Chapter concerning sexual offences. The penal scale was made stricter by increasing the minimum penalty for rape from 6 months to 12 months of imprisonment. The Chapter contains a separate provision on aggravated rape. Sexual offences were more extensively defined as offences subject to public prosecution, which was an important change.

1.2 Legislation concerning the restraining order ("prohibition to approach")

An Act on a restraining order that prohibits a person from approaching another person (898/1998) entered into force on 1 January 1999. A restraining order may be imposed, if there are reasonable grounds to assume that a person against whom a restraining order is imposed, is likely to commit an offence that threatens the life, health, freedom or peace of the person who feels threatened, or is otherwise likely to seriously harass the protected person. A person who is subject to a restraining order is not allowed to meet the protected person or otherwise contact, follow or stalk on this person. If there are reasonable grounds to assume that the above-mentioned prohibitions are not sufficient to prevent a threat of crime or other kind of harassment, the restraining order may be extended to concern also loitering near the permanent or holiday residence, working place or other similar place of the protected person. A restraining order can be issued for a fixed period, the maximum duration of which is one year. Such an order is renewable. A violation of the order is an offence punishable by a fine or by imprisonment for at most one year. A restraining order must be issued by a court of law, whereas the police can only issue provisional orders. So far there have been more cases (513) in courts than expected concerning the restriction order.

The Supreme Police Command has provided the police with guidelines on the procedures to be followed in respect of restraining orders. Information on the restraining order has also been increased, and a related leaflet has been published.

1.3 Supporting the victim of violence

The Act on Criminal Proceedings (689/1997) entered into force 1 October 1997. In this connection the status of the victims of sexual offences and violent offences was improved. The court is able to appoint a trial counsel for the plaintiff both for the pre-trial investigation and the trial in cases that concern certain indecent assaults and violent offences, if the plaintiff has claims in a case that is subjected to public prosecution. The trial counsel's fees are paid out of government funds. It is possible to appoint a trial

counsel if the complainant is a victim of an indecent assault referred to in Chapter 20 of the Penal Code, unless there is a particular reason to consider this unnecessary. A trial counsel may also be appointed in a case that concerns an offence threatening another person's life or health referred to in Chapter 21 Sections 1 to 6 of the Penal Code, in which case there should be reasonable grounds to do so in the light of the relationship between the plaintiff and the suspect. According to the preparatory work of the Government Bill (HE 82/1995 vp) this might be the case, for example, when the plaintiff is the wife in a case where her husband has committed a violent offence.

It is possible, in the above-mentioned case, to appoint an assistant for a plaintiff, who does not present claims in the trial and who is being heard in person during the investigation, and if it is deemed that the person might need assistance in the pre-trial investigation and in the trial. The conditions for the appointment of an assistant are otherwise the same as for the appointment of trial counsel. The assistant's fees are also paid out of government funds.

1.4 Project for the Prevention of Violence Against Women

As mentioned before, the National Programme for Preventing Violence against Women is considered to be the major achievement in implementing the Government's Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality. Under this programme the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has launched two five-year projects in 1998: The "Project on the Prevention of Prostitution" and the "Project for the Prevention of Violence against Women". Projects are implemented by the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health.

The aim of the "Project for the Prevention of Violence against Women" is to make violence against women visible, strengthen the public opinion against violence, reduce violence and develop and increase the efficiency of services provided for victims and perpetrators. The output of the project will be compiled into a national programme to reduce violence against women. The development of legislation and the follow up on the implementation of reforms are also important areas of concern.

The project was originally circled around the prevention of domestic violence, including sexual violence against family members. However, it is extended to cover any violence against women taking place either in private or in public. Attention is also paid to sexual harassment of and violence against women at work.

An information campaign against domestic violence, "One punch is too much", was carried out in co-operation with the city of Helsinki in the autumn of 1998. A nation-wide TV campaign and a support phone were part of the larger campaign.

The creation of international networks is important at the European Union level, for learning new models and methods for the prevention of violence, and for increasing know-how. Finnish project workers have taken part in the conferences held by the European Council, the EU and the Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE). The Finnish project has aroused interest in the international forums. The project brings together know-how by consulting different branches of government on questions of violence against women.

1.5 Survey on violence against women

An extensive survey on the extent of violence against women - the first of its kind in Finland and even in the EU - was conducted by Statistics Finland in co-operation with the Council for Equality (in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health). The survey has aroused great interest both in Finland and other countries, as few countries have conducted such a thorough investigation of domestic violence.

The results of the survey were published in both Finnish and English in 1998, "Faith, Hope and Battering. A Survey on Men's Violence Against Women in Finland". Violence against women proved to be a surprisingly common problem in Finland. According to the study, 40 % of all women had after the age of 15 experienced physical or sexual violence or threatening by men. Of the women living in a partnership, 22 % had experienced physical or sexual violence or threatening with violence by their present spouses - 9 % of them during last year. The survey also showed that more than half of all relationships that had ended in separation had been violent. Of all victims of violence, 12 % had sought help against violence by their partners, and 6 % of all violent men had sought help to stop their violent behaviour.

According to the Plan of Action, the results of the above-mentioned study will be used to evaluate the costs of violence to society and individuals. The analysis will be made by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Council of Equality and Statistics Finland.

2. Minority groups

2.1 Roma women

Unemployment among Roma women is usual. Discrimination against Roma women is apparent especially in employment situations as a so-called double discrimination phenomenon, based on both the sex and the traditional dress used by people of that particular ethnic background.

As pointed out by the Advisory Board for Romani Affairs, they have problems in, for example, questions concerning child day care. On the one hand, it is more difficult for unemployed persons to get their children into day care than it is for persons who are employed. Looking for work, on the other hand, is also difficult because children are not in day care.

Roma women encounter difficulties when entering public places due to their ethnic background and traditional dress. In district courts several cases on discrimination against Roma women, in particular, have been handled in 1998-1999.

The Roma training unit working in connection with the National Board of Education has continued to arrange seminars meant especially for women. The most recent seminar, the topics of which were related to the upbringing of children and awareness of one's status, was held in September 1998.

2.2 Immigrant women

Citizens of other countries still make up only a small proportion of the Finnish population, although the number is rising. At the moment, foreigners account for only 1.7% of the total. According to the Population Register Centre, there were 85,697 foreigners on 31 May 1999, 42,448 of whom were women.

According to a Government Resolution of 16 October, 1997, the aim of the country's official immigration and refugee programme is to lay down guidelines for Finnish policy on these matters. The objective is to help immigrants to integrate into Finnish society by making it possible for them to take part in economic, social and political activities as equal members of society, with the same rights and duties as Finnish citizens. The programme gives immigrants the right to maintain and develop their own culture and religion, in harmony with Finnish law.

In its Plan of Action, the Government commits itself to improving the participation opportunities of women belonging to minority groups and disabled women.

In May 1999, a ministerial working group on immigration policy and ethnic relations, assisted by a group of public officials from the competent ministries, was set up by a Government decision.

The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) was set up on 15 May 1998 to continue the work of the Advisory Board for Refugee and Migrant Affairs (PAKSI). The Decree on the functions of the new Board gives prominence to the promotion of good ethnic relations and the prevention of racism and ethnic discrimination. A subsection on women's rights provides for the monitoring of the implementation of the Equality Act specifically from the viewpoint of women immigrants, and ethnic discrimination in society, work and education. A working group also monitors the Government Plan of Action and its implementation vis-à-vis women immigrants, together with the implementation of the recommendations on the position of women immigrants given in the report by the earlier Advisory Board.

A working group set up by the last-mentioned Board published its report on the status of women immigrants in Finland on 31 March 1997. Women immigrants were widely represented in the working group. Its function was to draw attention on women immigrants and their status, and to launch and support the compilation of data on their situation in Finland. The group's brief was limited to problems related to working life and education, and to maintaining and developing culture and identity. Its final report pointed out that its work was hampered by the scarcity of proper statistics and studies on the subject. Statistics are produced on immigrants without distinction by gender, or they are grouped by nationality, in which case immigrants who have obtained Finnish citizenship do not show.

On 1 October 1998, the Ministry of Labour set up a management group representing various ministries and the Finnish League for Human Rights, to prepare an effective system for monitoring racism and ethnic discrimination which would be ready to operate at full scale in 2000-2001. This management group has launched several surveys related to ethnic discrimination, including a comprehensive study of the forms such discrimination takes, to be published in the autumn of 1999.

Amendments made to and new provisions inserted in the legislation during the past two or

three years specifically concern the reception of immigrants and ways of improving their status. In particular, they have improved the position of women and children.

A new Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers (493/1999) entered into force on 1 May 1999. Its aims include furthering ways in which immigrants can participate and exert influence in Finnish society, and encouraging interaction and tolerance between immigrants and the rest of the population, including good ethnic relations.

The main objective of the Act is to promote employment among immigrants and encourage them to seek further training and education, to help them to cope economically and socially, and to foster the implementation of fundamental and human rights.

The Act is implemented with the help of an integration programme carried out at the local level. The Act provides for an integration benefit to be granted to the immigrant for a period of three years. A condition for the granting of the benefit is that the immigrant participates in the elaboration and implementation of a plan for the integration of the individual immigrant or family. In the integration plan the local authority, employment office and immigrant agree on action to help the immigrant and immigrant family to integrate, which the authorities engage to arrange and the immigrant to carry out. They include language instruction, compilation of a study plan, trainee work, preparation for vocational studies and social contacts. In case the immigrant is not willing to participate in the elaboration of the integration plan or does not comply with it, his or her economic benefits may be cut.

The action laid down in the Act will help women immigrants to understand and enjoy their own specific rights. The overall principle is that it is important to provide both men and women immigrants with information on such rights related to the status of women as concern equality, marriage and the participation of women and children in society on which the position of women in Finnish society is founded.

Specifically from the woman's point of view, plans aim to help mothers of large families and other women to understand their rights, obtain information about society, democratic ways of exercising influence, customs, culture, right to equality, and the standing of women and children, learn everyday Finnish and grasp the significance of education, etc. Plans are drawn up in the awareness that many cultural norms in the country of departure may face women and girls with conflicting requirements, compared with the status of women in Finnish society.

2.3 Refugee women

The Finnish definition of a refugee is based on the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees. Courts, however, have been very cautious in finding gender-related persecution. The legal practice of the Asylum Board includes one case where the vulnerable position of the appellant as a single woman was given as one criterion for acknowledging her need for international protection.

The special needs of women in the asylum procedure are recognised in that the interviewer and interpreter may be women. There is no absolute right for this, however. Women are interviewed individually without their husbands being present.

However, there are no national guidelines on refugee women, where the special needs and position of women could be better addressed. Non-governmental organisations have on many occasions taken up the need to prepare European guidelines on female refugees.

3. Disabled women

In Finland the societal position of disabled women has been subject to public debate for years already. The 1990's have seen a strong increase in the awareness of the rights of disabled people, also disabled women.

Services and aid are a central part of the social policy for the disabled emphasising rehabilitation and participation in society. In the 1990's especially those services for the disabled to which the severely disabled have a so-called subjective right have increased. Such services include the medical rehabilitation and certain other services based on the Act concerning services for the disabled (transport services, interpretation services, service housing, home improvement services and provision of household tools and equipment), arranged by the Social Insurance Institution. The existing Act concerning services for the disabled has been in force as such since 1994.

Special services for the mentally handicapped are used by 21 000 persons. In 1997, a three-year project (Networking Special Services) was introduced by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the purpose of which is, *inter alia*, to ensure special services for the mentally handicapped.

The use of special services meant for the mentally handicapped, arranged by the districts for the special care of handicapped persons, has diminished. The objective is to provide the services for the mentally handicapped as normal municipal services. The share of institutional care in the social welfare of the mentally handicapped has decreased and is meant to be somewhat further diminished, as replacing housing and auxiliary services are developed. The districts for the special care of handicapped persons will more clearly be responsible for the provision of institutional care and expertise, supporting the municipal basic services. It is especially challenging to try and meet the service needs of ageing mentally handicapped persons living with their parents. A large majority of them will be needing different kinds of housing services during the next few years. Other services needed include home-help, family care, day-time activities and family guidance and support.

4. The promotion of equality in the media

Finland's third report dealt with the Finnish Broadcasting Company Ltd (Oy Yleisradio Ab). The tenth anniversary of equality work in the Finnish Broadcasting Company was celebrated in December 1997. In 1998 the Board of Directors of the Company approved a new equality plan. In 1999 this plan received an award for the best equality plan from the Minister for Equality and the Ombudsman for Equality. The principle of mainstreaming was taken into consideration when this new plan was drafted, and it also includes positive action to promote gender equality.

The Finnish Broadcasting Company carried out a five-year project "Image of Women and Men" (1994-98). This project focused on gender equality in the Company's programmes. It studied and analysed news, fiction and children's programmes as well as the essence of journalism in relation to gender. The results were aimed at supporting the programme makers in their efforts to increase equality in the programmes and to serve different audience groups better. Launched together with institutes of communication and their researchers at various Finnish universities, this co-operation of study and education work has extended to co-operation between six public service broadcasting companies.

As a result of the project "Image of Women and Men", the Finnish Broadcasting Company and five other European public broadcasters launched a project called "Screening Gender". The purpose of the project is to bring gender into the mainstream of the media policy debate, to sensitise both the media professionals and the general public to gender issues and to help address problems in gender presentation by creating awareness and demonstrating alternative approaches.

As a result of the project, the broadcasting companies hope to produce an audio-visual training package (consisting of videos, background material and workshops), which would illustrate the current situation on television and demonstrate alternatives available to programme-makers in portraying gender. The training package would then be distributed to media professionals and other interested parties in Europe and elsewhere.

The project was launched in July 1997, and it will continue until June 2000. The project is co-ordinated by the Finnish Broadcasting Company and it is co-financed under the European Commission's Fourth Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

This year, the MTV3 Channel published a new equality plan entitled "Tasa-arvo 2000" ("Equality 2000"). The new equality plan aims at a changeover from informing to implementing. While the first Equality Plan of MTV3 Channel from the year 1995 mainly focused on information about equality issues and related problems, the new plan aims at achieving concrete results in equality issues. The 1999 equality plan is divided into sections that can be updated individually. It also endeavours to address equality questions for each group of employees separately, since the different groups have reached different levels of equality. The equality plan concerns among other things quota provisions, the opportunity of positive special measures in recruitment situations and the mainstreaming principle. Besides personnel policy objectives, the plan also includes objectives of programme policy, which aim at influencing e.g. the visibility of women in the programme supply of the MTV3 Channel and encouraging women as programme-makers.

In connection with its new equality plan, the MTV3 Channel has also assessed how the equality objectives have been achieved in the company. Increased equality is demonstrated e.g. by the fact that there are now more women in the middle management of the company than at the time when MTV3 Channel started its equality work. As for the top management, the situation has not changed. The jobs in MTV3 Channel continue to be divided between women's jobs and men's jobs, and this will be one of the major challenges for the company in the future.

The Union of Journalists in Finland has continued to elaborate its equality programme. In particular, the Union has endeavoured to activate employers in order to increase equality in its member companies.

The Association of Finnish Lawyers has published a "Handbook on Women's Human Rights". It deals with international commitments binding on Finland; especially the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the national legislation

5. Discriminatory advertising

As mentioned in the previous report, the Council on Equality in Advertising is composed of representatives of advertisers, advertising agencies and the media. The Council's practice has developed through cases. The Council has dealt with some twenty cases per year, in total 180 cases between 1989 and 1999, of which 4 % have been published.

Apart from the Council on Equality in Advertising, also the Consumer Ombudsman can intervene in discriminatory advertising. The Consumer Ombudsman has dealt with and prohibited a number of discriminatory marketing measures and has also taken a position on the use of sexuality and nudity in advertising as a means to attract attention.

6. Men´s and women´s joint responsibility for the family

6.1 Unremunerated domestic work

Studies reveal that working adults often help their own parents to cope with daily routines. About half of the people who have one or both parents alive, help them at least once a month. It is also interesting to note that men do this kind of helping as often as women, as it breaks down the traditional gender-related division of care work.

6.2 Family leaves

The regulations concerning maternity, paternity, parental and child-care leaves were amended in 1998 so as to make them more flexible for families. The Employment Contracts Act (320/1970) was amended by inserting a new Chapter 2a in the Act (amendment 357/1998), which provides for the employee's family leaves. Family leaves include maternity, special maternity, paternity and parental leave, child-care leave, partial child-care leave, temporary child-care leave and the right to be absent from work due to a compelling family reason . Chapter 2a of the Employment Contracts Act also provides for the employer's duty to pay wages during a leave, the employee's right to return to work upon the termination of a family leave and on the mandatory nature of the provisions.

The aim of the amendment was to clarify the provisions on the employee's family leaves and to facilitate the use of leaves. The father can take a paternity leave while the mother is on maternity or parental leave. However, men in Finland have seldom used the possibility of taking a parental leave. The shorter minimum duration of a child-care leave and the possibility to take one child-care leave period simultaneously with the maternity or parental leave of the other parent aim to make fathers use the family leaves provided in the Employment Contracts Act more than before. In addition, the provisions on the maternity, special maternity, paternity and parental leaves and child-care leaves of the Employment Contracts Act were harmonised with a directive of the Council of the European Union implementing the agreement on parents'

leaves between European labour market organisations. The amendment also takes into account the requirements of a directive on maternal protection.

Because of these new provisions, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health are jointly working on a campaign aimed at encouraging fathers to use their right to take family leave.

A broadly-based committee set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health worked in 1998-1999 to find ways of reinforcing the father's and grandfather's role and rights and their possibility of experiencing fatherhood to the full at different stages of their lives. It made proposals on legislative reforms as well as on research and development projects that would support the role of fathers. The committee also proposed that the parental leave should be prolonged by a "father's month", i.e. 25 working days, to be used by father.

Article 6

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

1. Preventing commercial exploitation of women

1.1 The Project for the Prevention of Prostitution

In the Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the commercialisation of sexuality, prostitution and trafficking in women were identified as one of the main areas of concern in the prevention of violence against women.

The purpose of the "Project for the Prevention of Prostitution", carried out by the National Research and Development Centre of Welfare and Health, is to study prostitution at the national and international levels and to compile and produce information on the phenomenon of commercial sex. The project provides expertise and information on questions related to prostitution. Information on questions related to sex business is transmitted to the media, authorities, decision-makers and different organisations.

The rapid growth of sex industry is reflected in an increased prostitution in different forms also in Finland. At present there is very little research-based information on the diverse and rapidly changing field of sex industry in Finland. Because the subject is sensitive and difficult to study, an essential objective for the project is to promote research. The compilation of a bibliographic database of Finnish and Nordic literature on prostitution and a study on the daily press as a forum for sex trade are under way.

One purpose of the project is to promote co-operation and experiments between authorities and non-governmental organisations, with the help of which the development of equal and positive sexuality is supported. These points of view are taken up in project seminars, in different forums and in the training of regional working groups related to the project for the prevention of violence against women.

Finland is a target and transit country especially for the moving prostitution of the Baltic States and Russia. Apart from more distant countries, these neighbouring areas have more and more become destinations for sex travel from Finland. A Programme (called STOP) was introduced within the framework of the project together with the Ministry of the Interior, with the aim of developing co-operation between the authorities of the neighbouring countries in the prevention of organised prostitution and trafficking in women. The Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior has issued guidelines to the police on 1 May 1999 for combatting trafficking in women, prostitution and related crime. At the same time an Act amending the Aliens' Act entered into force. The grounds for the refusal of entry into the country include, *inter alia*, a reasonable suspicion that the alien would earn income by dishonest means or by selling sexual services.

The project for the prevention of prostitution is also part of the Nordic network of authorities and social and crisis workers dealing with questions of prostitution. The network is a forum of co-operation through which questions concerning and changes in prostitution are monitored. During the year 1999 Finland's project for the prevention of prostitution is responsible for the secretarial functions and the co-ordination of the network.

1.2 Working group on problems relating to the use of erotic telephone services

A report by a working group set up by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, on problems related to the use of (chargeable) erotic telephone services and on the need to control them was completed in March 1999. The report proposes that more information be directed at young people by using different channels and that more effective instruction be provided in co-ordination with schools. Similarly, the working group suggests that telecommunications operators inform their customers, for instance in connection with invoicing, of the self-regulation system and the possibility to restrain one's access to these services.

1.3 Reform of the legislation on sexual offences

The provisions in Chapter 20 of the Penal Code were amended by an Act (563/1998) that entered into force at the beginning of 1999. Offering money in return for sexual services from a young person under the age of 18 was made a punishable offence. In other cases offering money in return for sexual services is not a punishable act. Procuration remained as a punishable act.

Furthermore, a requirement of double criminality in certain situations was abolished. It is possible to apply Finnish legislation to an act, even when the act is not punishable under the legislation of the place where the crime was committed, if the suspect is a Finnish citizen or a person of similar status by the law. It is possible to impose a punishment on the act in Finland, if it concerns the circulation of a sexually offensive picture, possession of a sexually offensive picture of a child, sexual abuse of a child, offering money in return for sexual services with a young person and procurement, if it involves a person under 18.

1.4 Entertainment services for adults in the Internet

The use of the Internet and the services provided in it, such as entertainment services for adults, have increased. The use of service numbers for the purpose of entertainment is diminishing and services are increasingly provided through the Internet and other channels.

Problems associated with entertainment services for adults have been dealt with at international fora. The Ministry of Transport and Communications is, in co-operation with the other EU Member States, developing new lines of action to prevent the spreading of illegal and detrimental materials through global networks. On 25 January 1999 the European Parliament and the European Council made a decision on the adoption of a multiannual Community plan of action to improve the user safety of the Internet. In particular, the plan of action is intended to prevent the use of the Internet for trafficking in human beings, crime against children and spreading of racist and xenophobic ideas.

The plan of action concentrates on the creation of a safe user environment and the development of filter and classification systems. Essential elements of the creation of a safer user environment include the establishment of a Europe-wide network for the purpose of reporting illegal and detrimental Web sites and the provision of support to self-regulation and creation of rules.

1.5 Prohibition of prostitution in public places

In the past few years, there has been a lively debate on street prostitution in Helsinki. In the beginning the criticism mainly concerned sex clubs the number of which has nevertheless become significantly smaller and, consequently, the prostitution has moved to the streets. The expanding prostitution has proved to be problematic for the order on the streets. Therefore the City Council of Helsinki decided on 15 September 1999 to insert a prohibition of prostitution in public places in section 5 of the city regulations.

2. Sexual Rights

Amended legal provisions on sexual offences entered into force at the beginning of 1999. The purpose of the new provisions is to more clearly protect the sexual rights of adults and to improve the criminal law protection of children. According to the new provisions, rape can be committed against both sexes, and both women and men can be found guilty of rape. In the same way as already earlier, the provisions concerning rape can also be applied to a rape taking place within marriage. Sexual intercourse between an adult and a person who is under 16 years of age is prohibited in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. The public prosecutor's right to prosecute was considerably extended by the amended provisions.

A working group set up by the Ministry of Justice in December 1997 delivered their report, "The Law and Relationships Between People of the Same Sex", in May 1999. The working group was set up for the purpose of identifying the legislative measures needed to remove the deficiencies in legislation, as regards the free union of two persons of the same sex, and co-ordinating the co-operation between different Ministries. The working group suggested, *inter alia*, that partners of the same sex be given the possibility to make their relationship official.

Such a possibility would give the couples, with certain exceptions, the same rights and obligations as married couples have.

Article 7

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organisations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

1. Right to vote

In the parliamentary elections of 1908, the turnout percentage of women voters was 9% less than that of men. Since then the turnout percentage of women has constantly increased so that in the elections of 1972 it was only 0.9% less than that of men voters. Since 1987 women have been more active voters than men (1987: women 76,6 % and men 76,2 %; 1995: women 73.1 % and men 70.6 %;1999: women 69.7 % and men 66.8 %).

In municipal elections the women's turnout percentage surpassed that of men already in 1984. In municipal councils a little less than a third of members are women.

More or less 40% of the candidates in parliamentary elections, and one third of the 200 members of Parliament have for long been women. In 1999, 74 women were elected to Parliament, which is five women more than in the 1995 parliamentary elections. In 1995, there were 67 women elected to the Parliament, which is 10 members less than in the 1991 elections. Researchers and politicians have come up with different hypotheses on the reasons for the changes.

In the European Parliament elections the Finnish women have been slightly more active than men. In 1999, women's turnout percentage was 30,8 % and that of men 29,5 %. The corresponding figures for 1996 were 58,4 % and 56,7 %. A little less than 40 % of candidates have been women (39 % in 1999 and 38 % in 1996). In 1999 seven women and nine men were elected to the European Parliament and in 1996 the number of both women and men was eight.

2. Composition of the Government

8 of the 18 ministers of the Government, appointed after the 1999 parliamentary elections, are women. They hold the offices of both Ministers of Education, both Ministers of Social Affairs and Health, Second Minister of Finance, Minister of Labour, Minister of the

Environment and Minister for Foreign Affairs. The duties of the Minister for Equality are performed by the Minister of Social Affairs and Health. 11 (34 %) of the 32 members of the Government committees and 4 of the19 chairpersons of the committees appointed by the Ministries are women.

3. State Civil Servants Act

3.1 Staff policy of the State

In its own Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality (1997-1999) the Finnish Government as an employer has undertaken to promote women's participation in decision-making by means of, *inter alia*, the ministries' own equality plans and a development programme for office personnel. All the Ministries have made an Equality Plan referred to in the Equality Act, to promote an equal career development for both sexes, among other things.

3.2 Highest ranking officials

On 6 February 1997 the Government issued a Resolution for the purpose of reforming the criteria and methods applied to the appointment of highest ranking public officials. The Government Resolution is based on proposals of a working group set up by the Ministry of Finance.

Due to the changes in government structures and areas of operation, the highest-ranking public officials are in a new position, and the requirements imposed on them have both changed and increased. The criteria and methods for the appointment of the highest-ranking officials have gradually been changed so as to meet with the present-day requirements. The objective is to ensure that the most qualified persons will be appointed to the highest posts, improve personnel management in State administration, enhance developmental assignments and thereby make it possible to acquire diverse experience needed for managerial duties, and increase the number of women performing such duties.

A new development project has been launched to ensure a well-planned training of personnel, providing sufficient potential for managerial and expert duties. The project aims also to enhance the possibilities of women to increase their competence for managerial and expert duties. The development plans have underlined, *inter alia*, the importance of identifying managerial potential, equality, job rotation, developmental assignments and mentoring.

An increasing number of the highest-ranking State officials are women. In 1998, this figure was 20 %. The corresponding figure for the entire public sector, including municipalities, was 40 %

4. Funding granted to women's organisations

As stated in Finland's third report, the activities of women's associations get no statutory public financing. The Ministry of Education grants discretionary state subsidies to the National Council of Women of Finland and to the Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations for Joint Action (NYTKIS). The amount of subsidies has steadily increased;

in 1999 it will be FIM 550,000. Moreover, the Ministry of Education has granted state subsidies to women's organisations for separate projects related to the Ministry's field of administration. The Ministry will go on supporting women's organisations by granting subsidies and separate project grants.

When the lottery legislation was being prepared, representatives of the Coalition of the Finnish Women's Associations for Joint Action proposed that the group of beneficiaries entitled to a share of the profit from money lottery, betting and the pools should be extended so as to include women's associations.

Article 8

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations.

Reference is made to previous reports.

Article 9

1. *States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.*

2. *States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.*

Reference is made to previous reports.

Article 10

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help

to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organisation of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

(g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

1. Promoting equality in working life through measures of labour market policy

A new system of labour market policy reform came into force at the beginning of 1998, aimed at improving the functioning of the labour market and preventing marginalisation among the unemployed.

The system now focuses on individual employment services and on improving their quality. One key objective of the reform was to make the service process more efficient, allowing action to be taken to deal with factors contributing to unemployment at a much earlier stage.

A job-seeking plan is now drawn up jointly by the employment office and the job-seeker, the purpose of which is to list all the person's skills and experience in order to formulate a service package including subsidised work and training that will ultimately equip him or her to find a job on the open labour market. Interviews are held and individual plans reviewed at regular intervals, activating the job-seekers and allowing obstacles to employment particularly typical of women to be removed.

Job-seeking groups, which can be set up on the basis of a number of criteria, are an essential part of the revised process. Job-seeking groups can be set up for specific target groups, and their content can be adapted so that it is more suitable particularly for women.

The labour administration's guidance and training services can be listed to promote and encourage gender equality on the labour market, influence people's choices and career orientation, and improve the functioning of the labour market. It is the job of the employment services to promote gender equality by informing both sexes equally about training and work options, and to help clients who are looking for jobs outside normal gender roles and new opportunities for working (e.g. support for women entrepreneurs). Likewise, personal career counselling can also help clients when they are thinking of entering non-traditional fields. The career counselling can be seen as an in-depth service in which an individual solution is sought for clients, both men and women, or a plan drawn up to which they commit themselves.

The Finnish Employment Action Plans drawn up for 1998 and 1999 in accordance with

the EU Employment Guidelines give the status of women on the labour market and job creation for women special consideration, both in the specific objectives laid down for equality and at all levels of the plan. It is clear that if equality between the sexes is to be achieved, equality is first needed in working life and families, and that the main thing is to safeguard welfare services and implement equal pay in working life.

2. Education and equality

Since the mid-1970's approximately 55 % of new university students have been female. Fields dominated by women in terms of both the number of applicants and the number of new students are veterinary medicine, kindergarten teacher and primary school teacher training, and health sciences. In contrast, all fields of technology are dominated by men.

The proportion of men and women of the population with a university degree is equal. Almost 60 % of the labour force with a university degree are women. Approximately 40 % of those with a postgraduate degree (licentiate and doctorate decree) are women. Of different educational fields and disciplines, only in technological fields is the proportion of women small, less than 20 %.

Between 1996 and 1998 the Ministry of Education requested universities to give account and estimates of how they have sought to influence student selection and balance the gender structure. The methods used by universities have included different scoring systems in entrance examinations and internal changes in the content of admission criteria. According to the universities, however, entrance examinations are not widely used to influence the gender structure of different fields of study. The effect of student selection on gender structure will continue to be studied.

On the grounds of the Act on Vocational Education (630/1998), the Ministry of Education has issued a norm decision on the selection criteria of students in basic vocational training. The decision means that candidates are given points also on the basis of gender. An applicant receives three additional points if she or he applies for training where under 30 % of the short-listed applicants in a given selection unit, decided on by the organiser of the training, are of the same gender as the applicant.

The objective of gender equality and reduction of gender bias has been taken into account in several projects on education e.g. in a national project, "Women in Vocational Training in Industry" (1996-1998), funded by the European Social Fund aimed at bringing about a change of attitudes and encouraging girls to apply for technical training and industrial jobs. The purpose of the joint project of the Ministry of Education and the European Social Fund, called Tietonaisia ("Learned Women") is to encourage girls to study IT basics and apply for conversion training.

In October 1996 the Academy of Finland appointed a working group to evaluate development needs relating to women's research careers and to make proposals for removing obstacles thereto, to study the effect of covert discrimination on the academic community and propose a development plan entitled "Women in Academia in Finland in the Year 2010". In its report submitted in September 1997, the working group proposed measures for developing evaluation methods, directing research funding and improving the position of young researchers and researcher families.

From 1997 to 1999, in making appointments, the Academy's research councils have also taken the objective of promoting of women's research careers into account. In 1998, the relative number of women appointed increased clearly, including the senior posts: 28 % of senior applicants were women, and 40 % of the appointees were women; 47 % of applicants for doctoral posts were women, and 57 % of the appointees were women.

3. Measures relating to youth and sports policy

3.1 Youth policy

The Finnish youth division of the Ministry of Education has launched a project which aims at mainstreaming gender equality in youth policy. The mainstreaming project was divided into three sections: equality in national youth work and youth organisations, equality in regional and structural policy, and equality in community development. All the themes have been processed since the autumn of 1998.

The Youth Division of the Ministry of Education continues its TASANUPO Project (Equality in Youth Policy), the purpose of which is to create a self-assessment system for youth activities and equality in such activities. The project produces assessment methods by means of which youth activities can be evaluated and developed, taking especially the aspects of equality into account. The project is implemented through two regional pilot projects which will continue until the year 2000.

Gender equality takes many forms in youth and youth work organisations. In the autumn of 1998, a questionnaire on equality plans and the gender division in administrative bodies was sent to national organisations. It was found that 26 organisations had a slight female majority. Some of the organisations had a considerable male majority; these organisations focused in one way or another on one particular hobby, such as stamp collecting or technology, or directly worked with boys. The focus of the organisations with a female majority was not as clear-cut, but one clear grouping was organisations with an international and political orientation.

Research plays an important role in the equality issues relating to youth service. For instance, during the second half of the 1990´s, there have been several analyses of girls' role in different communities. In addition to research on girls and young women, there is also research on the role and position of boys and young men. The overriding principle has been the utilisation of research results in youth activities, youth work, and youth policy.

In efforts to improve the living conditions of young people, the gender issue is important for both the prevention of exclusion and alleviation of the effects of exclusion. For instance, the number of girls using drugs is on the rise, and separate projects for girls have achieved prominent results in the prevention of drug use.

3.2 Sports policy

The overwhelming representation of men in competitive sports has been significant for equality debate, it is also reflected in other sports and their promotion. According to studies made, more money is spent on sports for men and boys than for women and girls.

Under paragraph 1 of the new Sports Act (1054/1998), which came into force on 1 January 1999, the purpose of the Act is to promote equality through sports. There have been several separate projects for the promotion of equality.

The Finnish Olympic Committee has launched a top sports project for women, based on the Top Sports 2000 strategy which is subsidised by the Ministry of Education. The aim is to enhance appreciation for women's top-level sports, to promote quality in Finnish training, to help talented female athletes to reach the international level, and to improve Finnish women's success in top-level competitions. The project supports women's sports careers both in competitive sports and in coaching. The project has received an IOC Olympic Solidarity grant. So far it has focused on gathering information on women as athletes and trainers, and in 1999 it will be implemented in practice.

In the spring of 1998, the Ministry of Education launched a research and review project concerning sports facility services and equal opportunities. Access to sports facilities is also studied from the viewpoint of gender equality. Equality has also been a criterion in the Ministry's funding policy since 1998, when the Ministry of Education started to grant a specific appropriation to projects promoting equality in sports. The Ministry annually allocates a Spikes award and Spikes grants to individuals, communities or projects which promote equality in sports.

A project on gender equality in coach training (1998-2000) develops the training of coaches working with different age groups and at different levels. The aim is to train coaches to take gender differences into account and to support athletes according to individual needs and capabilities. This project forms a part of a larger project for the promotion of equality in sports education.

The Finnish Sports Federation has adopted a Plan of Action for Promoting Gender Equality for 1998-2000.

The Finnish Sports Federation holds the presidency of the European Women and Sports (EWS) network from 1998 to 2000. The priorities chosen for the presidency are to promote the share of women in decision-making bodies, women's training for decision-making posts and the (EWS) network. The EWS conference 2000 will be organised in Helsinki.

4. Women's studies

As mentioned in the third report, women's studies have quickly expanded, been diversified and become established in the 1990's. A proof of the great publishing activity of female researchers is that more than 200 new references have been notified for the updated version of 1999 of the bibliography "*Research on Women and Gender in Finland*". When the bibliography was compiled in 1995, it contained more than 2000 references from more than 350 researchers.

In 1993 an e-mail list was introduced for information and discussion about women's studies in Finland. Today, with more than 800 subscribers, it has become an important forum for the national debate.

As explained in the previous report during the past few years the situation at the universities has developed to a positive direction. Apart from University of Helsinki, which has a professor of women´s studies holding a fixed-term post of five years, the Ministry of Education has established eight new professorships for the universities of Helsinki, Tampere, Turku, Jyväskylä, Oulu and Joensuu, as well as for the Åbo Akademi University (Finland's Swedish university) and the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration.

The Ministry of Education has also established an Academy professorship of women's studies, the so-called Minna Canth Academy Professorship, in the Academy of Finland. Besides professorships, women's studies also need lower teaching posts, and so far there are only a few of them. In the future, the increasing of the resources of women' studies and the ensuring of the continuity of teaching will be some of the major issues in the development of women's studies.

Article 11

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;

(b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;

(c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;

(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

(f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be

harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

1. Elimination of discrimination in working life

1.1 Promoting equality in working life

In 1998, women represented 50 % of the population at working age (15 to 64 years old), 47 % of the labour force and the employed, 50 % of the unemployed, and 55 % of all non-employed. Thus the general indicators of differences between men and women are "equal", that is, women represent about half of all groups.

1.1.1 Equality plans

A survey on the equality planning of workplaces at the public and the private sector, launched by the Ombudsman for Equality, was completed in 1998. This survey (Equality Publications 1/1998) examined the situation of equality planning in about one hundred working communities. The survey was published in Finnish only.

The survey was based on a questionnaire, which was sent to all the ministries, 44 offices and public services, 19 universities, 5 state-owned companies, 10 largest cities and towns, 30 companies and 5 labour market organisations. Moreover, interviews were made in 9 companies and 2 labour market organisations. Of offices and public services, those with a minimum permanent staff of 30 were included. The surveyed companies were among the largest Finnish companies or multinational corporations operating in Finland, chosen as far as possible from all existing branches. Of the central branches, only construction was excluded. Of the surveyed firms, 19 were listed companies. The labour market organisations included in the survey were central organisations. In total 126 questionnaires were sent out, and 95 organisations replied them (75.4 % of the organisations subject to the study).

According to the survey, the situation in equality planning is fairly good. However, it must be taken into account that the majority of all employees work in companies that were not covered by the survey. In all groups surveyed, a total of 78 % had either made an equality plan or were preparing it. At the time of the survey, more than half of all the organisations included had made an equality plan. In many organisations, the promotion of equality was included e.g. in various programmes on personnel development or in a plan of action for occupational safety and health, or it had been taken into account in some other way, although no actual equality plan existed.

Not until now are many organisations preparing their equality plans. In such cases it is premature to assess the impacts of the equality planning on the employees and the activities and the performance of the organisation. Even at those workplaces where an equality plan already exists the concrete impacts of the measures cannot be seen until later on. According to the survey, the preparation of the plan in itself is significant, since it makes employers pay attention to gender-related issues.

The Ombudsman for Equality encourages equality planning in companies by giving instructions and counselling and paying visits to companies. Moreover, since 1998 the Minister for Equality and the Ombudsman for Equality have awarded diplomas to working communities that have significantly promoted equality at work by means of equality planning. In 1998, six working communities were rewarded and in 1999 three communities. The rewarded working communities had made excellent equality plans and promoted internal equality by other concrete measures.

1.1.2 National Workplace Development Programme

The National Workplace Development Programme launched by the Ministry of Labour in 1995 will continue in 1999-2003. One important area of this Programme, which is being carried out jointly with the social partners, is the promotion of gender equality at the workplace and the dissemination of good practices.

The Programme is supporting an initiative called the "Equal Working Community" launched by the social partners in 1998 in nine work places. It is further explained in Article 11 section 6.

2. Atypical employment relationships

The number of atypical employment relationships, which rose during the recession at the beginning of the decade, has now levelled out. In 1998, 17.4% (women 20.5%, men 14.5%) of the workforce had fixed-term jobs.

Fixed-term employment relationships have been especially associated with young age and the beginning of a working career. They continue to be most common among young employees who have just entered into working life. However, as fixed-term employment relationships are increasing, they are also beginning to affect other groups of employees, particularly women. As late as in 1990, more than half of all - both female and male - fixed-term employees were under 30. The proportion of fixed-term employment contracts has increased most among women aged over 30, for whom they have more than doubled in ten years.

A similar development can be seen in the group of employees aged over 40 where more than one third of female employees have a fixed-term employment contract, while only every fourth male employee has such a contract.

New employment relationships of under 12 months' duration are atypical more often than usual. In 1997, two thirds of them had been entered into on a fixed-term basis.

The female employees in fixed-term employment relationships are better educated than before. In 1997, one in four women in such a position had a university degree, while the corresponding proportion among men was 13 %.

The difference between men and women can partly be explained by the number of family leaves taken by women, and by the fact that women use statutory job-sharing opportunities more than men. The State administration uses fixed-term employment relationships more than other employers.

Furthermore, far fewer men than women have part-time jobs. In 1998 only 6.5% of men had such jobs, compared with 15.7% of women (definition of part-time: maximum 30 hours a week).

The security of people in atypical jobs has been improved, aiming to give such employment relationships an equal status with permanent, full-time jobs. The changes in the law apply, for instance, to the right to annual holiday compensation for work of at least six hours, employment pension accrual on all employment relationships, the employer's duty to pay wages for time of sickness, the right to study leave in short employment relationships, and job security for agency workers.

Job-sharing models have also been developed further. The Act on the Job Alternation Leave experiment (1663/1995), originally passed for three years, is being extended until the end of 2001 (1201/1997), and the part-time supplement system is now fully established. In these arrangements, the employee agrees on his/her leave with the employer who engages to hire an unemployed person as a replacement. The original employee receives compensation for the time taken off: in the alternation leave system 70% of what would be the normal unemployment allowance and in the part-time supplement system half of the lost pay for working time (up to a maximum of FIM 4,300/month). Both systems are quite popular, and are mostly used by women.

In 1997, 6,344 people used the alternation leave system, but in the following year the figure was already 9,450. It has been most used in the municipal sector, among employees in education, social welfare and health care, but it is also spreading in the private sector. A legal amendment which entered into force at the beginning of 1998 improved the conditions, leading to an increase in the leave's popularity. In the part-time supplement system, employees changing voluntarily over to part-time work can be paid compensation for a loss of income if the employer engages to hire an unemployed person suggested by an employment office as a replacement.

3. Immigrant women on the labour market

The employment situation among immigrants has improved side by side with the general economic and employment situation. In the recession years of the early 1990´s, the Finnish employment rate (15-64 year olds) declined by over 10 percentage points and exceptionally, in 1993-1994, fell below the EU average. By 1998, however, the rate had already risen to 64.1% (being 66.9% for men, and 61.3% for women), and the rise continued in the early months of 1999. At the end of 1996, the unemployment rate amongst all foreigners in Finland was 45.6%, and at the end of November 1998 39.1%.

The high level of unemployment in Finland, poor language skills and below-average educational levels of women immigrants make their position difficult. The final report of a working group set up by the Advisory Board for Refugee and Migrant Affairs, to study the standing of women immigrants (published 31 March 1997), made several proposals for improving their position, noting that the special needs of women immigrants should be taken into account in planning, preparation and decision-making.

Several European Social Fund projects and other projects financed from EU sources have been launched in the past two or three years, aimed at improving the employment

prospects of various immigrant groups. The Ministry of Labour has produced a new edition of its brochure "An Immigrant Woman in Finland" and this has been translated into many languages, including Russian, Somali and Tagalog.

4. Manpower services directed at the Roma and Sami population

"Suomen Romako" is a joint project between the Finnish labour administration and the European Social Fund, aimed at Roma who want training and jobs on the labour market. The aim is to design a "measure" for promoting Roma equality at work. Individual initial assessments are made to establish each person's skills and suitability for both training and work. The project is currently expected to continue until the end of 2000.

There are three employment offices providing services in the Sámi language in the area covered by the Lapland Employment and Economic Development Centre. The offices in Enontekiö and Utsjoki use Sámi almost daily, while Sámi clients at the Ivalo office use Finnish, as is also the case in Sodankylä, where there is a small Sámi community in the Vuotso area. Services other than job placement (i.e. vocational guidance, training and vocational information service, labour market training and vocational rehabilitation) are only available in Finnish.

The labour administration also purchases labour market training and combined training from the vocational course centre covering the Sámi area. Brochures have been produced in Sámi, together with other Sámi material on public services, but these are outdated and are only available in the form of copies. The employment offices in Enontekiö and Utsjoki, in particular, have proposed the allocation of special funding to improve employment services aimed at the Sámi people in general.

5. Supporting the professional training and employment of the disabled

The full integration into society of disabled people is enhanced by improving their ability to work. The promotion of training and employment of the disabled has become an important challenge for social policy during the past few years. In accordance with the EU guidelines for employment, the main aim of Finland's employment policy is to raise the employment rate of the entire population. This activating employment policy makes use of, for example, new employment methods created by European Social Fund projects, which are to be inserted in the national policy. The objective of Finland's employment policy is to improve the quality control of subsidised employment, to improve the training of job counsels and the organisation of the professional job counselling so as to cover the whole country by the end of the year 2000.

As part of the implementation of the Finnish employment plan, in accordance with the EU guidelines, the Rehabilitation Allowance Act, the National Pension Act and the Disability Allowance Act were amended as from 1 August 1999, in order to guarantee the right to professional training and a raised rehabilitation allowance for all 16 to17 years old disabled persons.

Supporting the professional training and employment of the disabled, a rehabilitation

allowance will be paid to those disabled young persons who have begun occupational training before attaining the age of 18 years, until the first training is completed or until it ends without results. Invalidity pension is no longer granted before an on-going period of rehabilitation has ended. The purpose of the change is to alter the status of such seriously disabled young persons who have earlier retired already at the age of 16, without an evaluation of their working capacity and without rehabilitation. Pension is granted to a person under 18 years of age only if occupational rehabilitation has been found to be impossible.

Furthermore, people who are only entitled to invalidity pension, based on the National Pension Act, can interrupt their pension for at least six months and at most two years. To make working more profitable than being on a pension, a disability allowance corresponding to the amount of a special disability allowance shall be paid to the disabled person during the interruption of pension.

6. Collective agreements

The income policy agreement for the years 1998-1999, signed on 12 December 1997, pays particular attention to the wage inequality between women and men. According to the agreement, the working group set up in 1990 by the central labour market organisations would continue its work to promote and follow the development of the work assessment systems and to issue opinions on work assessment at the request of central organisations, the Ombudsman for Equality or the trade unions jointly.

The so called equality allowance, included in the income policy agreements was meant to level off the gender pay gap. The equality allowance is intended to improve the wages of those women whose wages do not comply with the requirements of their work and with their education. This measure is not alone sufficient to bridge the wage gap between women and men, but by agreeing on the allowance the parties recognise the problem connected with the wage differences. It can be seen as a measure that contributes to the levelling of the wage differences. It has also been a means to remove structural differences between the female and male dominated branches.

The sectoral collective agreements covering both the private and public sector, which will expire in January 2000, include a special pay component which depends on the number of women and level of pay in each sector. The social partners are also promoting equal pay by developing and introducing ways of evaluating job demands in indvidual companies and sectors.

The income policy agreement also contained a provision on the launching of a specific development project on "Equal Working Communities". The purpose of this project is to advance equality by encouraging work places to promote equity on the basis of their own needs and in the context of other development work. The parties also agreed on the promotion of a more equitable distribution of family responsibilities and family leaves and the encouraging of fathers to take such a leave. Also the possibilities of shared family leaves and a more flexible use of them must be examined.

7. Wages

Throughout the 1990´s, the average earnings for regular working hours of women

employees in full-time jobs have been around 80 % of the men's level (82% in 1997) (Statistics Finland), even though women are members of trade unions at least as often as men. Pay differences between women and men working in the same jobs are somewhat fewer than the gender differences in pay throughout society as a whole. Pay differences in the public sector are slightly smaller than in the private sector. The discrepancies are partly caused by labour market segregation.

Appended to this report is statistical data showing the pay differences between men and women in 1990-1998. The data is based on the earning level index and income distribution statistics obtained from the Statistics Finland.

There is a sharper division of labour by gender in Finland than in many other EU Member States; women and men tend to work mainly in different sectors and professions. Only 9 % of the economically active population works in sectors with an equal amount of women and men. Every third is employed in a sector where at least 90 % of the employees are of the same sex. This makes the labour market more inflexible and also reduces the availability of labour.

The Finnish Employment Action Plan for 1999, which follows the EU Employment Guidelines, states that this year the labour administration will work out a procedure by which the alleviation of labour market segregation through public action can be integrated into management by results and quality criteria.

The segregation of the labour market into male and female- dominated sectors may well affect trends in working conditions - including pay - in female -dominated fields. After all, additional costs are generated in these fields because women use family leaves. This is one reason for that family leave system has been made more flexible, giving fathers more opportunities to take these leaves in practice.

8. Unemployment among women

8.1 Unemployment of women in 1997-1998

Table 1. Average number of unemployed job-seekers in 1997 and 1998

	1997	1998
Men	c. 215,000	c. 190,000
Women	c. 194,000	c. 182,000

Source: Ministry of Labour

Women's unemployment is not higher than that of men, although it did rise sharply during the recession, reaching the same level. In 1998 unemployment fell by the same amount among both women and men, relatively speaking, as the industrial revival was followed by

a revival of the home market, which raised the level of employment among women, specifically.

The women's unemployment rate (12%) has been slightly higher in the late 1990´s than the rate for men (10.9%), but the difference is small when compared with other countries. In 1998, there were 142,000 unemployed women and 143,000 unemployed men. Employment has risen more slowly among women than among men since the recession, and there still is a large number of unemployed women in secretarial and office work, health care and nursing, sales work and work for which professional qualifications are not necessary. The rather slow rise in women's employment is partly caused by the fact that the public sector no longer employs as many women as it did in the late 1980´s.

The risk of long-term unemployment is somewhat smaller among young women than among young men. Unemployment among those under 25 years of age in general has fallen sharply. All in all, there are less women among the long-term unemployed, which is unusual by EU standards. In Finland, women tend to be more willing than men to accept fixed-term jobs and also participate actively in labour market and other training. More than half of all those taking part in such programmes have been women. Employment among women has, for instance, been furthered by support for entrepreneurship and through ESF projects.

8.2 Measures of labour administration to reduce unemployment among women

When unemployment among women rose in the mid -1990´s because of the recession, a special working group set up by the Ministry of Labour, representing various fields of the administration, investigated ways of improving the situation.

The report of the working group, published in 1997, studied trends in women's unemployment in different sectors and the reasons for it. Its recommendations were for adoption of the mainstreaming principle in economic policy, support for women entrepreneurs, greater flexibility in systems of child care and more father involvement in them, making computer training more interesting to girls, and improving the position of people in atypical employment relationships.

The private sector employs increasingly large numbers of young people with a university degree. The possibilities of the State and municipalities to provide jobs have decreased in the 1990´s. Since the municipalities have traditionally been important employers of educated women, the harder financial situation of the public sector has effects in particular on women´s employment opportunities.

8.3 Ageing women workers

The status of older women on the labour market has deteriorated in the review period. The aim of the Programme for Ageing Workers (1998-2002) is to reduce unemployment among people who have passed the age of 45 and discourage premature retirement and marginalisation. Another aim is to enhance the mental and physical capability to work, and possibilities of employment of ageing workers. The main agencies involved in the Programme are the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education. The methods used include changes in the legislation,

more advanced services, overhauling the structures of working life, research, training and information.

The aim is to create more positive attitudes for the ageing and teach the labour market to value the positive sides of age, such as experience, broader command of matters, conscientiousness and maturity. The area covered by the Ministry of Labour includes several measures designed to improve the labour market standing of ageing job-seekers.

During the first year, the programme has circled around the provision of information, planning of training as well as assessment and introduction of research and development projects. It is already possible to see a positive change taking place in the general attitude towards older workers.

According to the interim report on the Programme (March 1999), the employment rate among people under 60 years of age has remained stable in EU Member States during the 1990´s, but has fallen sharply among people aged 60-64. In Finland, employment rates among 25 to 55 year-old persons are much higher than in the EU in general, rates among 55 to 59 year-old persons are as high, but rates among 60 to 64 year- old persons are lower.

Finland's ranking in international comparison is explained largely by women's high participation rate in the labour market. In Finland more women in all age groups go out to work than in practically any other country. One exception is the other Nordic countries, where the rates are even higher, partly because part-time work is more common than in Finland.

Ageing unemployed job-seekers, particularly, are much more poorly educated and trained than younger people. Measured by the percentage of people with an upper secondary level education, the Finnish population is better educated than the OECD average, except in the age group of 55 to 64. Finland's ranking in OECD statistics is boosted by the educational level of women, which is far higher than the OECD average. However, the educational level of ageing Finnish men is below the OECD average.

The Act on Co-operation within Undertakings (723/1997) includes a provision requiring ageing workers to be taken into account in personnel and training plans.

The publication of the Ministry of Labour "Ageing workers and changing working life" is appended to this report.

9. Social security

9.1 The development of the social security expenditure

Before the recession at the beginning of the 1990's the costs of the Finnish social security system were at the European average of 25-27 % of the gross national product. The recession raised the proportion of social security expenditure of the Finnish gross national product clearly above the European average. The expenditure was at its highest in 1993, amounting to 35,5 % of the gross national product. Since 1994 the expenditure has gone down. The decline is mainly due to a rapid economic growth but also to significant reforms and cuts made to

social security. The estimated social security expenditure in 1998 was 28 % of the gross national product. It is predicted that the expenditure will decrease to 27 % in 1999, approaching the European average. However, in the next millennium the ageing population will create pressure to increase social security expenditure especially in respect of services provided for elderly people.

There have been considerable changes in the structure of social security expenditure during the 1990's. Although the expenditure has mainly been directed at elderly people and medical and health care, unemployment costs remain a large part of the expenditure, due to the wide-spread unemployment. Medical and health care costs were the first ones to go down at the beginning of the depression, when the municipalities reduced their health care budgets and cuts were made to the daily allowance. Since 1995 the costs of health care have rapidly been rising again.

9.2 Pension benefits

The statutory pensions can be divided in two different schemes: earnings-related employment pensions and national pensions. Legislative amendments were made in 1996 and 1997 to clarify the role of the two schemes. The national pension scheme provides pensions on the basis of residence in Finland to guarantee a minimum income, whereas the employment pension scheme is based on employment and related to earnings.

The national pension scheme is a scheme providing a pension to those with a small earnings-related pension or no such pension at all (e.g. women who have been housewives all their lives). The rates of full national pensions are set by the law. The law sets different rates according to the pensioners' places of residence (municipalities), since there are regional differences in the costs of living in the country. The rate is also dependent on the pensioner's marital status. The amount of an individual pension is also affected by other factors. Firstly, the pension is adjusted to the length of the pensioner's residence in Finland. Secondly, the amount of the national pension depends on the amount of pension paid from the employment pension scheme. The appended table lists the rates of national pensions, assuming that a person has lived in Finland for 40 years between the ages of 16 and 65.

At the end of 1997 the procentage of pensioners in the receipt of both employment and national pension was 79 %. National pension only was paid to 10 % of the pensioners. Employment pension only was paid to 11 % of the total number of pensioners.

10. Children's day care

At the end of January 1999, 49 % of children under school age were placed in municipal day care. The increased number of children in day care is partly due to the improved employment situation of women.

At the beginning of August 1997, the day care of small children was reorganised. The aim of the reorganisation was to clarify and simplify support systems and to remove the differences in the determination of day care allowances in different municipalities. According to the new system, the day care allowances are determined on the basis of the size and income of the family. Due to the reform the day care allowances of families with a good income were lowered. A new form of support, the private care support, was introduced. It is an alternative

to municipal day care in cases where the parents want to arrange private care for their child. Children's home care support system was restructured: at present the support consists of a care allowance, additional amount for each child and income-related additional amount.

In the spring of 1999, the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health has, in co-operation with the research and development unit of the Social Insurance Institution, conducted a national child care survey commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, on the child care arrangements of Finnish families. The survey is a question-based demographic study emphasising rather the point of view of the family. According to the survey, almost half of the children under school age are looked after at home. Municipal day care is nearly as usual (46% of children). About two thirds of municipal day care is provided by day care centres and one third by private families. The proportion of private day care of all children's day care in Finland is marginal (4-5%). The proportion of care outside the home increases with the age of the child. Of children under one year, only two per cent are looked after outside the home. This is because the large majority of families make use of the maternity and parental allowance period. Of children between one to two years of age, 36% are either placed in day care centres or in family day care, whereas the figure for children between three to five years of age is 64 %. As regards children who have attained the age of six, 75% are in municipal or private day care.

11. Special protection at work for pregnant women

Employees are entitled to a special maternity leave because of pregnancy, and to a special maternity allowance during it. Under the Health Insurance Act (1192/1990), the precondition for special maternity allowance and leave is that the conditions at the pregnant woman's work or workplace involve a particular risk because of some circumstances such as chemical substances, radiation or possibility of infectious disease, which may endanger the foetus. Special maternity allowance is then paid on the same basis as the regular maternity allowance, provided that other work cannot be arranged for the person concerned.

Article 12

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

1. Promoting health

Drugs

In December 1998 the Government made a resolution on drug policy, suggesting measures for the prevention and early intervention in the use of drugs, care and support for abusers and their families and supervision. The implementation of the suggested measures is being prepared.

In March 1999 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health set up a working group consisting of representatives of the competent ministries and subordinate agencies, to co-ordinate the national drug policy and further the Drug Strategy. The purpose is to establish a procedure by means of which both authorities and NGO´s could report on their actions to prevent drug use. In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has appointed a committee to draw up proposals for the prevention of drug use among young people.

In recent years health care authorities have intensified their contribution to the treatment of drug abusers. A new kind of treatment for heroin addicts was introduced in 1997.

The national drug supervision centre, founded in 1996 and placed in connection with the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES), operates as a nation-wide provider of information on drugs. The Centre publishes for example an annual report on the use of drugs. The Centre has intensified its activities.

All indicators of the drug problem (experimenting with and use of drugs, deaths and crime) have been rising throughout the 1990's, but because the starting levels were rather low, the problem has not reached the same levels as in Central Europe.

"Drugs in Finland in the 21st century" is a cross-sectoral programme that is to be implemented by the Academy of Finland between 2000 and 2002. The projects to be financed through the programme will focus on drugs as a social problem, drug policy, extent of drug use and ways of use, social and health effects of drug use, and relieving of drug problems.

Smoking especially among young people

Smoking among young people has not diminished much during the past twenty years. The favourable development at the beginning of the 1980´s turned into a rise at the end of the decade. In the 1990´s smoking has, according to a survey on the health habit of the youth, stabilised, and in 1999 hardly any 12 year old children smoke daily and 12 % of the 14 years old boys and 17 % of the girls of this age group, 28 % of the 16 years old boys and 29 % of the girls of this age group and 34 % of the 18 years old boys and 29 % of the girls of this age group smoke daily. According to a study on school children carried out by the WHO, 25 % of the 15 years old boys smoked in 1994 and 19 % in 1998. Smoking among the 15 years old girls stayed at 20 %.

Of men born at the beginning of the century, 80 % had smoked regularly at some point of their lives, whereas less than 10 % of the women in the same age group had smoked. This difference has nearly disappeared among those born in the 1960´s, and there are hardly any differences between the sexes in the younger age groups. Instead, an education-based difference has appeared, so that a little more than 10 % of all university students smoke, while

about half of those in polytechnic institutions and vocational schools smoke. In the coming decades this difference will notably increase the social inequality of health.

2. Health care during and after pregnancy

In the monitoring of pregnancy, more attention is paid to the development and supporting of parenthood. Apart from the public maternity welfare clinics, there are also approximately ten private clinics in Finland. The number of births has gone down in the past few years, whereas the average age of women giving birth has gone up (in 1997 the average age was 29.8 years). The prenatal death rate has continued its descent throughout the 1990's. In 1996 it was 6.2 per thousand children.

"The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative" programme is still in operation in Finland. The aim of the programme is to promote and support breast feeding in maternity hospitals.

Maternity welfare clinics work in co-operation with the prenatal clinics of the maternity hospitals. 99 % of all births take place in hospitals. The time spent in hospital when giving birth has become shorter. The amount of caesarean sections done has increased during the 1990's.

Of all pregnant women 99 % go to prenatal clinics for a check-up during the first four months of pregnancy. In order to receive the maternity allowance, the mother must have the check-up. The maternity allowance is given either in the form of a maternity pack or money (FIM 760). The maternity pack contains clothes and other requisites for child care.

In 1999 a new national Recommendation concerning maternity services will be issued. The Recommendation will provide instructions, *inter alia*, on planning and monitoring of pregnancy, family guidance and childbirth preparation, breast feeding and quality of maternal welfare. At the same time the forms used in prenatal clinics will also be renewed.

The Government's programme of action for social welfare and health care (1999-2003) stresses the promotion of the welfare of children and young people.

3. Family planning and abortions

Human relationship and sexual education continues to be part of the curricula of Finnish comprehensive schools. Family planning and birth control services are provided by school health care, special clinics and doctors in health care centres.

The proportional number of abortions is still low in Finland, compared with the statistics of Nordic countries and with other international statistics, even though it took an upward trend in 1996, for the first time in ten years.

The decline in the number of abortions stopped in 1995. In 1996 the number of abortions increasing by 550 from the previous year was 10 437, that is 8.3 per one thousand women of the age group 15 to 49. The number increased in all age groups under 40. A slight drop was then recorded in the following year (10 238), but the preliminary figure for 1998 (10 600) is higher than it was in the five preceding years.

The upward trend in the age group under 20 began in 1995 already (1502), when the total number of induced abortions was still clearly falling. In 1997 the rise continued in the age groups under 20 (1653). According to the preliminary data for 1998 there was a slight increase. Even so, there still are fewer abortions among young people than in the age groups 20-34.

Since the entry into force of the present Abortion Act, the largest number of abortions has been performed in the age group 20-24: about 15 cases per 1000 women of the same age in 1997 and 1998.

The number of abortions is the largest in Northern Finland.

School health care and birth-control clinic services are free for all. When starting birth control, the clients are also given contraceptive pills for free during the first few months. Birth control services are part of the preventive health care referred to in the Public Health Act, and include advice on the choice and follow-up of birth control method as well as health education.

4. Sexually transmitted diseases

The present situation of sexually transmitted diseases in Finland has remained stable during the past few years. In 1998 there were in total 187 new cases of syphilis, 269 cases of gonorrhoea and 10 658 cases of chlamydia. There are in total 967 HIV-positive persons of whom 215 are women. In order to promote sexual health, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health sends each year a circular concerning sexuality to sixteen-year old persons, containing a condom and an information letter to be given to the parents. The National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES) has launched a project for the promotion of sexual health and birth control among young people (RASKE). Regional sexual health development projects for young people are under way in Northern and Eastern Finland. Organised by the family planning centre of Central Finland, a specialisation course (worth 40 credits) for professionals in sexual education has been available since 1997.

The promotion of sexual health and welfare in the near future will have an emphasis on the following areas:
- increasing the efficiency of sexual education for the young,
- development of guidance on sexuality as part of social welfare and health care services,
- development of family planning services,
- prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, and
- prevention and reduction of the detrimental effects of commercial sex

The promotion of sexual health is supported by an allocation reserved in the State budget for sexual education and by an allocation reserved for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

Article 13

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to family benefits;

(b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;

(c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

1. Supporting women entrepreneurs

The Finnish Government Programme underlines the need to strengthen equality both at work and in family life, and to promote entrepreneurship among women. In line with the EU Employment Guidelines, the Finnish Employment Action Plan includes measures to promote entrepreneurship, with a firm focus on women. These measures include loans to women entrepreneurs and special training programmes. Entrepreneurial and development (KEKO) training are designed to generate completely new workplaces, which can be set up after a period of practical training, for instance.

Employment offices can grant unemployed job-seekers deciding to become entrepreneurs a "start-up" grant to safeguard their income while they are starting up the new business and getting it on its feet. The number of women receiving such grants has risen, and in 1998 accounted for 45% of the total, which is far more than the proportion of women entrepreneurs on the whole.

Special measures aimed at women entrepreneurs include special loans that the Ministry of Trade and Industry grants to small businesses with no more than 5 employees, owned and directed by women. Women must own at least half of the business. It is estimated that some 1,300 new jobs were created in 1998 as a result of these loans.

Experimental financial support for household work came into effect temporarily on 1 October 1997. This has given women opportunities to find household work and work in the caring professions. Eastern and Western Finland are experimenting with a "business support" model in which financial support is paid directly to the business receiving the service. Southern and Northern Finland are at the same time trying out a tax subsidy model in which households are subsidised through a tax deduction. This aims to help service enterprises by reducing the prices of the services they offer households. As demand increases, more jobs can be created. Preliminary survey findings show that enterprises selling household services are female-dominated; female-dominated enterprises accounted for 47 % in the business support model and 51 % in the tax deduction model. The experiment will continue until the end of 1999, when a decision will be taken either to continue it or to place one of the models on a more established footing.

The labour administration can support co-operatives set up by unemployed people by issuing enterprise grants to get activities off the ground. Women have been particularly active, and have found new work opportunities through such co-operatives. According to a survey made by the Ministry of Labour in the spring of 1999, an average of 47.9 % of co-operative members were women.

1.1 Supporting women entrepreneurs through Finnish regional development programmes

Creating new jobs, raising the employment rate and preventing marginalisation are key

elements in regional programmes and the work of the European Social Fund (ESF). ESF action through regional programmes had improved the skills and employment potential of some 135,000 people by the end of 1998.

The Objective 2 programme includes staff training programmes to help businesses, and action to encourage and introduce networking and new technology. It also promotes gender equality on the labour market by paying particular attention to the special needs of female-dominated fields. The 1997-1999 programmes focus even more on the job-creation potential of women's entrepreneurship.

1.2 Supporting women entrepreneurs through the Structural Funds of the EU

EU provisions on the new Structural Fund period (2000-2006) stress the importance of implementing gender equality in programmes on the mainstreaming principle. Finland takes this into account in the preparations for its ESF programmes (Objective 3 and its frame of reference, which defines the background for support action to promote employment and personal resources throughout the country, and the Community initiative "Equal"). "Equal" will have an impact on action to combat all kinds of discrimination and inequality on the labour market. The gender viewpoint, and specific action to improve the position of women in working life, are key elements in programme work.

In the proposed frame of reference prepared under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour for submitting to the Government in autumn 1999, innovation to develop existing opportunities is emphasised and new models for improving equality and the status of women on the labour market are highlighted.

Finland has good experience of the Community initiative "Employment NOW (New Opportunities for Women"), which was designed to improve the status of women on the labour market by using innovative pilot projects, and to eliminate vertical and horizontal divisions of labour between the sexes. Experiences of this programme will be disseminated more broadly during the coming programme period.

Action will also be needed during the programme period to promote the establishment of new enterprises and safeguard the development potential of existing ones. Women's business skills will be upgraded in order to increase the number of women entrepreneurs and encourage them to take up 'non-traditional' fields.

2. Promoting equality in culture

In the Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality for 1997-1999 the Government recommends that the Arts Council of Finland and regional art councils take into account gender equality in allocating grants and grant-like subsidies and conferring awards. Art councils are composed in accordance with the Equality Act, to have both men and women members.

In most fields of art and in most art education institutions, the share of women keeps growing, which will probably soon lead to female majority in the art professions. In 1997, 65.5% of students in cultural fields in vocational colleges were women, and 59% in higher education institutions in the corresponding fields. In 1998, 44% of the recipients of

government grants in the field of arts and culture were women.

Women tend to manifest interest in culture more than men do. With the exception of playing musical instruments, women pursue creative art hobbies more often than men do. Men and women are equally active in associations, clubs and organisations. In 1997, 63% of local culture-related posts were held by women.

According to plans, all public libraries in Finland will offer Internet facilities by the year 2000. The gender balance of information network users has been levelling out recently. According to the new Library Act (904/1998), libraries should promote equal opportunities for the use of library and information services and the use of virtual and interactive network services and the development of their cultural content.

Article 14

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

(a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;

(b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;

(c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;

(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;

(e) To organise self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self employment;

(f) To participate in all community activities;

(g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;

(h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

1. Developing rural areas

The Structural Funds of the European Union aim to reduce regional disparities and enhance regions lagging behind in development. In recent years, the Structural Fund programmes which aim to achieve these objectives have paid more attention to the equality aspect than before. A separate report was made on themes relating to the equality

aspect, in the programming period 1995-1999, when a mid-term review of the Objective 5b programme, which aims to promote rural development was drawn up. The report includes several recommendations on how to promote gender equality through these programmes.

At the beginning of 1998, a report was made on how to take the equality aspect into account in the evaluation methods and criteria relating to Structural Fund programmes. The report shows how programmes and related projects can be evaluated with regard to the promotion of gender equality. This report was drawn up by several ministries.

As regards the new Structural Fund period 2000-2006, the equality aspect has been taken into consideration to a large extent in the preparations for the regional objective programmes (Objective 1 = development of regions lagging behind in development; Objective 2 = economic and social conversion of regions in structural crisis). A "checklist" of equality-related matters was also made for the preparations. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior, which co-ordinates the preparation of the programmes, employed a researcher for three months to find out how the equality aspect could be included in these programmes.

The role of women has also been taken into account in regional development at the national level. A Women's Working Group for Rural Development has been established. It is subordinate to a Rural Policy Partnership Group, which has been appointed by the Government and which co-ordinates rural development matters. The above-mentioned working group aims to improve the status of rural women by increasing their opportunities to earn income and exert influence, and encouraging them to participate in decision-making in society.

On the initiative of the Women's Working Group for Rural Development, an experiment has been set up to promote female entrepreneurship through team work, training and loans. Moreover, dozens of projects are being carried out with the aim of encouraging and training rural women to this effect. The working group publishes a quarterly news bulletin (Naisuutisia), which aims to encourage women and make them more active by providing them with information on training and financing, various projects, recently started businesses and successful entrepreneurs.

The European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 5b programme supports women entrepreneurs through measures that increase business skills and through training, to help the development of tourism in villages and rural areas. Two examples are the "Varsinais-Suomi female skill training" project and the "Island markets" project which is aimed at farmers, SMEs and unemployed people in the archipelago. The aim is that two thirds of all participants would be women.

Article 15

1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.

2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.

4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

Women and men are equal before the law under Finnish legislation, as specifically provided in Article 15 of the Convention. Reference is made to previous reports.

Article 16

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

Reference is made to previous reports.

Apart from the questions answered in the text above the Committee has expressed its concern over the relative absence of women in high-decision-making and administrative positions in both public and private sectors (the glass-ceiling phenomenon).

Men still occupy most managerial positions in the public and private sectors. However, the number of women in such positions in the private sector has increased. Whereas about one fifth (21 %) of managers in 1990 were women, already one fourth of them were women in 1995.

There was no change in the managerial profile in the 1990's: male managers form the majority in general, technical and marketing management positions, while female managers cover a wider range of managerial duties. Female managers form the majority only in the human resources management with a proportion of 61 % in 1995, compared to 56 % in 1990.

In the managerial hierarchy women are usually placed at the lower and middle management levels. In big enterprises, largely dominated by men, women managers do not reach the top management level. Only 2 % of the top managers in big enterprises in Finland are women.

The number of managerial positions in the public sector is relatively small when compared with that of the private sector. About one fifth of all managers in 1995 worked in the public sector.

In the public sector nearly 40 % of managers are women, which figure meets with the equality criterion (40/60). However, even in the public sector duties are different depending on the sex. In 1995 two out of three managers with the most important duties were men. As regards the public sector providing welfare services, the proportions of men and women were in balance.

The central State administration is dominated by men: 68 % of managers were men and 32 % were women in 1995. Only a few women occupy top managerial positions in the State administration. As regards managers in the local administration, 57 % were men and 43 % were women. The local administration is a major employer of women managers. 74 % of the women managers in the public sector are employed by municipalities or towns. Only 26 % of the women managers in the public sector are employed by the central State administration.

In 1998, 18.4 % of all professors at universities in Finland were women, which is the largest percentage in the Member States EU. The appointment of professors takes place either through the normal procedure of announcing a vacancy or through invitation which is getting more and more usual. Of such invited professors the proportion of women is smaller than that of men. In total 189 professors were appointed in 1998, of which 57 were invited to the office. Of all professors appointed 27 % were women, and of the invited professors 14 % were women.